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Unpopular Essays

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Brigadier Garba's Discovery

THE last week was a period of intense diplomatic activity for Foreign Minister, Brigadier Joe Garba. Intense and frustrating.

On the Security Council chair as moderator, he had expected the Zimbabwe question to be brought before him, but instead, America (with Britain), which had seriously campaigned for Nigeria's membership in the security council, decided to take the matter to Malta.

Again, Brigadier Garba had expected the West (whose position on Southern Africa he has

spent a good part of his diplomatic life defending) to join forces with him in condemning the internal settlement effort of Ian Smith in Zimbabwe, but instead, the West chose an option of silence.

And back in Lagos, airport—newsmen added to the irritation when they demanded an explanation from the minister for why his government, committed to the total liberation of Southern Africa, and with Africa at the centre — piece of its foreign policy, should permit itself the luxury of a special association with

Iran. Iran that makes no secret of its epic love affair with South Africa.

To the first set of issues, Brigadier Garba responded with a raging fury and righteous indignation. Righteous, because the Carter government in America had used the black colour of its U.N. Ambassador, Andrew Young to sell the story to Nigeria that the U.S. was capable, and indeed prepared to pursue a new policy in Southern Africa. Brigadier Garba had been so persuaded about the sincerity of this offer that he placed himself firmly in

the vanguard of a public relations team whose commitment to sell the putative new image of the United States to the rest of Africa was never in doubt. Nigeria, he insisted, had no right to continue quarrelling with the United States now that the Carter Administration had taken up the black case in Africa. "We should" he said in a television programme, "be friends".

What followed was a nightmarish revision of a progressive foreign policy. In the first half of last year, Nigeria put itself on the map as the

first (and only) party to the Zimbabwe dispute to accept, in toto, the Anglo-American peace pact for the colony. A little later, Nigeria started backsliding on its support of the Patriotic Front.

ed the Federal Government's view of the West, Brigadier Garba had a harsh word. He could not see why the government's position should generate "the most ill-informed opinion from so-called Nigerian radicals."

But last week, the Foreign Minister borrowed the analysis of the ill-informed radicals to renounce the same Western policy he had defended against the onslaught of the radicals. "The strategy," he said, "is

"FOR those who opposed the Federal Government's view of the West, Brigadier Garba has a harsh word. He could not see why the government's position should generate "the most ill-informed opinion from so-called Nigerian radicals."

Concessions to the West for its imaginary new posture on Southern Africa also followed other courses. For instance, in September last year, when news came that Western Germany had closed its consulate in Windhoek, Namibia, Brigadier Garba heralded it as evidence that West German policy towards South Africa was changing. He said the country's view on the crisis was becoming identical with that of the Nigerian Government, and on a generous impulse, invited more German firms to invest in Nigeria!

indeed easy to comprehend. Western objectives in Zimbabwe, as in the whole of Southern Africa, have never changed. What has emerged is a switch in the strategy designed to achieve the same objectives and preserve the same interests".

It was the anger of a man who had persistently been told how powerful his country was, on account of which he (on behalf of his powerful country) was voted into the Security Council — only to discover that the voters had chosen new arenas outside the Security Council to discuss African affairs.

For those who oppos-

The Issue Of A New World

AT a time when the gap in the levels of economic development between the developed Western and the young states is increasingly widening (it has grown 15-fold by now), attempts by the latter to remedy their critical situation through restructuring international economic relations meet with active resistance, as is indicated, specially, by the course of discussions on this issue both in the United Nations and in other international fora.

In the struggle for their economic rights, the developing countries demand a change in the character of trade and economic relations and note with anxiety their own fast growing indebtedness to the West, which has now exceeded 250,000 million dollars.

An important role in solving this problem was assigned to the international conference on economic cooperation in Paris, known as the "North South dialogue." Just as the case had been with similar preceding conferences, the Western countries did not stint promises. Actually,

however, they tried their best to evade a just solution to this question of vital importance for the developing countries. Consequently, the negotiations that had lasted for nearly a year and a half failed to produce any results.

The group of 19, speaking on behalf of all the Third World countries, submitted to the conference specific proposals on the mining and marketing of raw materials, the establishment of a fair balance between the prices of raw materials and finished products, etc.

The non-equivalent exchange of goods has become in practice the West's main instrument of plundering the Third World. Of the 200,000 million dollars end price of all the raw materials (with the exception of oil) exported from the developing countries only 30,000 million dollars find their way back to them.

The Western private and state companies, however, refuse to consider the question of raising the prices of raw materials, the develop-

Economic Order

ing countries' basic export item. At the same time, they keep on increasing the cost of their own exported manufactures and technology.

It is natural that the Western powers do not want to forego the profits

by

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they are making from such unequal trade. Therefore, they do their best to protract the discussion with a view to gaining time and freezing the process of restructuring economic relations in the world on a just and democratic basis.

In order to break the deadlock reached in the negotiations, an International North-South commission was set up, late last year, which is to study the matter as an advisory body and to issue its recommendations. It comprises 17

politicians from the Western and the developing countries.

But one can hardly expect much from the commission's work. This has also been admitted by Willy Brandt, who is Chairman of the commission. This is so, because it cannot act in place of governments and its resolutions are no more than recommendations. The developing countries have already started expressing apprehensions that this body with the participation of representatives of Western industrially developed states might also be used for further protracting the dialogue.

Nevertheless, the Third World countries are fully determined to go ahead with the struggle for restructuring inequitable international relations and establishing a new economic order based on genuine equality and mutual benefit.

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